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Weather
Highs of low-to-mid 60s across the Gorge through the week; higher chance of rain on the weekend.



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Columbia Gorge News

HOOD RIVER | THE DALLES | WHITE SALMON

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No easy fix to homeless issue

Mental illness a driver in problems; part 2 of 2

By Neita Cecil
Columbia Gorge News

THE DALLES — The Dalles Police Chief Patrick Ashmore has compassion for the homeless, and puts his money where his mouth is: He's done all-night shifts as a volunteer at the winter warming shelter.

But he also believes neighbors of the St. Vincent de Paul office in downtown The Dalles need empathy. St. Vincent's normally (in pre-pandemic times) houses the warming shelter, and is continuing as a year-round meal site for people who are homeless. In part 1 of this 2-part series, St. Vincent's residential neighbors described a daylight break-in, littering, feces, scary behavior and harassment from the homeless people who come to St. Vincent's for meals and other services.

Ashmore said of the neighbors, "It feels like their quality of life and safety are not considered at times."

See **HOMELESS**, page 8



The Dalles activist and city councilor Darcy Long-Curtiss sits at a table at the pallet shelter site in The Dalles. Previously set to close March 31, a recent grant will fund the facility year-round (see page A9). Mark B. Gibson photo

Wyden plans Gorge town halls

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden will have live, online town halls hosted by People's Town Hall for residents of Clackamas, Linn, Lincoln, Tillamook, Hood River, Jefferson, Deschutes, Klamath, Lake, Josephine and Polk counties.

The Hood River County event is at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 3 at www.facebook.com/events/456411829028757.

Oregonians in all listed counties who want to submit questions for Senator Wyden can do so online at forms.gle/tVCQmYNkuLeWvGzcf.

After the pandemic in March 2020 required Wyden's town halls to go virtual, he has continued to hold regional and county virtual town halls.

"I very much look forward to resuming the ongoing conversations with Oregonians in communities large and small to hear residents' priorities with the new Biden administration and Senate in its first weeks with the American Rescue Plan and more," Wyden said.

Post Canyon Trail could close

By Gail Oberst
For Columbia Gorge News

HOOD RIVER — A popular trail in Post Canyon is in danger of closing because it cuts through private property. The Hood River Board of Commissioners March 15 decided to pass on trading a tract of river front forest land in exchange for the private property near Post Canyon Drive owned by Erwin Haglund. Haglund's 42 acres borders Seneca Fouts State Natural Area to the north and west. The biking and hiking trail cuts through Haglund's and other private property. Haglund in December 2020 asked the commissioners to consider taking his land in trade for 150 acres of county forestland on Highway 35 known

as the Routson property. County Forest Manager Doug Thiesies discussed the issue with the board and agreed that the trade was not to the county's benefit.

That leaves the Post Canyon trail users and the property owners in the area without a solution, said Commissioner Karen Joplin. Access to the trail may be closed and fenced. "It's been made clear that these private landowners are done. We need to find a solution."

The commission discussed turning the matter over to the County Forest Recreation Trails Committee, which may investigate a land purchase, or other resolutions to the problem, including rerouting a portion of the trail to Post Canyon Road.



The Post Canyon trail, used by bicyclists and hikers, could close because it cuts through private property. Columbia Gorge News file photo

'Uprooted' — short film explores SDS timber practices ahead of sale

By Jacob Bertram
Columbia Gorge News

A virtual premiere of "Uprooted," a short film made by local resident Joel Roth that examines SDS Lumber Company's land management practices, saw more than 100 in attendance of the Sunday evening Zoom session to watch the film and to discuss how those practices may be impacted in the future.

The nine-minute film analyzes how the lumber company has maintained operations through sustainable management of the land. Through interviews with industry professionals and knowledgeable locals, the film makes the case that SDS Lumber Company's forest practices are both above average and at risk of being lost to a buyer who does not share those same practices.

Local environmental group Friends of the White Salmon River sponsored the documentary, which was shown amid the backdrop of news that Bingen-based SDS Lumber Company, which owns more than 100,000 acres of timberland across five counties, is preparing to sell the entirety of their corporate assets, leaving the future of local forests, critical area habitats located within the SDS-owned land, and the jobs of some-350 employees in the area uncertain. The video is hosted online at YouTube, search "Uprooted."

For the film, Roth interviewed Rainer Hummel, who worked with Washington Department of Natural Resources; David Powell, formerly an archaeologist with the Yakama Nation; wildlife biologist Bill Weiler; and artist/author Joy Markgraf. The film is available on YouTube for viewing.

"When we think about how SDS' approach differs from other timber companies is that they have very strong local ties. So they're very involved with the community, they deal with different stakeholders, be it hunters, recreationalists like mountain bikers or people that just want to go for a hike," Hummel said in the film. Hummel said SDS Lumber Company uses a 60-year rotation for their timber harvest, longer than the industry average.

The film also explores the relationship between SDS Lumber Company and the Yakama Nation, and its presence as an economic engine in the county. Powell said in the film that he worked with SDS and Yakama Nation for the cultivation of cultural resources before a harvest, and said that "anything that we found, (SDS) protected."

FWSR reached out to SDS to participate in the premiere but no one from the company attended, said Pat Arnold, president of the Friends of the White Salmon River.

"I'm really proud of Joel and proud of this film and I hope it serves the purpose of getting everybody talking and thinking,"



The "Uprooted" video can be found on YouTube.

said Arnold. "The potential impacts of the SDS Lumber sale just can't be overestimated and we hope to educate people about what is at stake here."

Roth had the opportunity to share his experience making the film.

"My perspective changed a lot while making this film. In the beginning, I was not really super pro-logging — you know I wanted the trees to stay here," Roth said. "But as I read articles and learned stuff I really see that it's an important part of this community; \$13 million is the revenue that comes around and I thought that was just a really interesting fact."

"It was a very large project. We started working on it back in the fall and spent about 200 hours of work," Roth said.

A short question and answer discussion followed. One viewer posed the question of what the ideal protection of the forest is in the perspective of Friends. Arnold replied that an ideal outcome, in her view, "is one that protects the forest, protects the habitat, protects the river."

"But we don't think this is just about us. What hit us, when we first saw that press release, is the economic effect on the community, and the effect on friends and neighbors and people who live here and work for the company," Arnold said, recalling the original announcement from SDS Lumber Company that they had intentions to sell the company.

"There's just all sorts of

See **FILM**, page 8

Region to get millions in stimulus funds

By Gail Oberst
For Columbia Gorge News

On March 23, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced that between state and local governments, Oregon will get approximately \$6.4 billion in federal funds from the American Rescue Plan. The stimulus plan's payouts will go directly to counties while cities and other local governments will be paid through the state. The payments aim to offset losses surrounding the COVID-19 virus and bolster local economies.

Hood River County, for example, is slated to receive \$4.53 million and Wasco \$5.17 million, according to early estimates provided by the federal Department of Treasury. Millions more will go to every incorporated city in the region based on 2020 population and budgets.

Among city payouts listed are: \$3.21 million, The Dalles; \$1.59 million, Hood River; \$590,000, White Salmon; \$350,000, Stevenson; \$240,000, Cascade Locks; \$90,000 Mosier. The entire list of payouts can be found at democrats.senate.gov/final-state-and-local-allocation-output-030821. Amounts may vary by the time the state distributes funds.

See **FUNDS**, page 6

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